



## Anna Burke MP

Federal Member for Chisholm

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# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Concerns about the War in Afghanistan

Federal Chisholm MP Anna Burke has used a parliamentary debate to voice her reservations about Australia's involvement in the War in Afghanistan.

Ms Burke expressed concern about the rising death toll from the War, which has so far claimed the lives of 21 Australian soldiers and thousands of Afghan civilians.

"Winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan public is critical, and I am not convinced this will be achieved through military means," Ms Burke said.

"I find it deeply disturbing that we cannot even nominate a ballpark figure for the number of Afghans killed since the beginning of this war in 2001. Most estimates range between 14,000 and 44,000 – a huge discrepancy for which there is no adequate justification.

"With civilian and military deaths in the tens of thousands, and with the definition of victory ambiguous, I believe it is time to cease Australia's military involvement in Afghanistan," she said.

Ms Burke questioned the extent to which the presence of International Military Forces in Afghanistan is having on radicalising Islamic youth.

"Our presence in Afghanistan is fuelling the extremist ideology we are trying to eradicate," she said.

"Islam is not a terrorist organisation; it is a religious faith. All faiths have extremists and all extremists have utilised violence in pursuit of ideology.

"I ask: does the current military strategy produce the consequence it is attempting to prevent?

"Already 21 young Australians have lost their lives as a result of this engagement. Let us not leave when the body count of Australian Defence Force personnel is too high for the public to tolerate," she said.

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